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LONG HOT SUMMER LIKELY HERE
WARNS MONTREAL Y SPOKESMAN

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YMCA OF MONTREAL

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The increasing urgency of the need to establish two-way communication between young people and adults was emphasized today by R.G. Rogers, assistant general secretary of the Montreal YMCA.

"Without major attitude changes on both sides, the generation gap will continue to widen and reach proportions which will threaten the continuity of our society," he warned the Rotary Club of Montreal.

"This threat is not just something we may have to face sometime in the vague future. It is real, it is here, and it may well confront us jarringly this summer," he stated bluntly.

In support of his premonition, Mr. Rogers pointed to the increasing number of young people who are attacking society, or withdrawing from it.

"Hostile acts by juveniles are on the upsurge. Unrest is mounting in high schools, as well as in universities. More teens are experimenting with sex, drugs and alcohol--and at an earlier age than ever before."

Such behavior, he insisted, frequently masks strong idealism, keen minds and unfulfilled desires to be acknowledged as responsible individuals. This is particularly true of the many young people who seem so indifferent, so docile and ready to capitulate to adult demands.

"When we adults don't understand, we generally either rationalize that 'kids will be kids', or we clamp down with such extreme and rigid controls that there is no room for human development."

Emphasizing that "we are not all wrong--and the young people all right," he urged nevertheless that adults take the initiative in developing two-way understanding.

Mr. Rogers also suggested that the current youth rebellion is essentially a negative reaction to the disparities between society's stated aspirations and the direction it now seems to be pursuing.

"With leadership, this rebellion can take a positive form," he said.

He noted, for example that before becoming corrupted by those attracted by "the glamor and trappings" of its symbolism, the hippie movement had been trying to build a value system which resembles a mixture of early Christianity and Zen Buddhism.

Unfortunately, the pseudo hippies took over and, during the past two years, have accounted for the sharp increase in run-away teens from affluent communities and the growing number of young people on the loose in urban areas.

Re-emphasizing the need for prompt action, Mr. Rogers noted that, while many young people will change as they mature, their current values and attitudes are being passed on to still larger generations of younger people.

Over the past three years, working outside of branches and regular programs, the Montreal YMCA has established contact with more than 3,000 young people who normally shun any of society's institutions.

As a result of this involvement, it was discovered that many seemingly indifferent young people are in fact desperate for real two-way relationships with adults.

"Through patient and understanding interchange we can learn to appreciate the genuine creative search of young people and, at the same time, gently challenge the naivety of overnight transformation and solutions to a troubled world," said Mr. Rogers.

"The key to communication is the ability to really listen," he said. "Only by demonstrating that we are truly interested in the ideas and opinions of young people can we expect them to share with us their hopes, fears and aspirations."